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Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 L-03 SSO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 EB-07

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 206764

MONROVIA FOR AMBASSADOR EASUM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, ETRD, NI, US

SUBJECT: GUTHRIE/SPRIGGS CASE
-
REF: A) STATE 205300, B. LAGOS 9405, C) LONDON
12843

1. CUSTOMS OFFICER OBTAINED VOLUNTARY INTERVIEW WITH NAF WING COMMANDER GEORGE OSHO AT 11:00 A.M. AUGUST 18. OSHO EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO GIVE INTERVIEW AND TOLD CUSTOMS OFFICER HE DID NOT REPEAT NOT WANT INTERVIEW MADE KNOWN TO NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT. (FYI: IN KEEPING WITH HIS WISHES, DEPARTMENT HAS NOT INFORMED NIGERIAN EMBASSY THAT INTERVIEW REQUESTED OR TOOK PLACE. END FYI.)

2. OSHO SAID HE REMEMBERED FLIGHT IN QUESTION ON WHICH MOORHEAD PLACED THREE PACKAGES ADDRESSED TO PERRY EUGENE
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GUTHRIE. OSHO SAID IT WAS COMMON PRACTICE FOR LOCKHEED

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EMPLOYEES AT MARIETTA TO SEND GOODS TO LOCKHEED EMPLOYEES STATIONED IN NIGERIA. ALSO COMMON PRACTICE THAT GOODS ONCE LANDED IN NIGERIA WERE SUBJECT TO INSPECTION BY NIGERIAN CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES.

3. OSHO SAID HE KNEW MOORHEAD AND GUTHRIE. HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW SPRIGGS. OSHO SAID HE NEVER KNEW OF GUTHRIE OR MOORHEAD GETTING INTO ANY TROUBLE IN NIGERIA OR DISPLAYING ANY CRIMINAL INCLINATIONS OR INTENTIONS. OSHO SAID WHILE HE WAS PILOT AND COMMANDER OF FLIGHT IN QUESTION, THERE WERE ACTUALLY TWO CREWS ABOARD SHIP: A NIGERIAN CREW WHICH WAS IN TRAINING, AND A U.S. CREW WHICH WAS ACTUALLY FLYING THE PLANE.

4. OSHO OBSERVED THREE TRUCKLOADS OF GOODS WERE, AT THE TIME OF THE INTERVIEW, ACTUALLY BEING LOADED ON NIGERIAN C-130'S CURRENTLY UNDERGOING MODIFICATIONS AT MARIETTA. HE SAID THIS WAS ROUTINE AMOUNT OF GOODS TO BE SHIPPED TO NIGERIA ON THE NAF PLANES EACH TIME THEY VISIT U.S. CUSTOMS HAS DETERMINED THAT THE GOODS INCLUDE CIGARETTES AND EVEN CARPETING. OSHO SAID CUSTOMS REGULATIONS ARE NOT POSTED ON THE AIRCRAFT BUT "IT IS UNDERSTOOD" THAT ALL ITEMS SUBJECT TO INSPECTION ONCE IN NIGERIA BY NIGERIAN CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES.

5. CUSTOMS HAS DECIDED IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO SET UP INSPECTION STATION FOR C-130'S PRESENTLY IN MARIETTA. (FYI: CUSTOMS OFFICER NOTED THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH U.S. LAW, GOODS FOR PERSONAL USE ARE NOT SUBJECT TO INSPECTION UPON DEPARTURE FROM THE U.S.. ONLY COMMERCIAL EXPORTS REQUIRE EXPORT DOCUMENTATION. END FYI.)

6. COMMENT: CUSTOMS OFFICER SAID OSHO CONDUCTED HIMSELF AS GENTLEMAN THROUGHOUT INTERVIEW. OSHO RELUCTANT TO HOLD INTERVIEW BECAUSE OF REAL FEAR THAT HIS COMMENTS, IF RELAYED TO NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT, MIGHT RESULT IN FMG AUTHORITIES HOLDING HIM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SERIES OF EVENTS WHICH LED TO THE GUTHRIE/SPRIGGS CASE WITH ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR HIS CAREER. WE CAN ASSUME, THEREFORE, THAT OSHO WILL NOT INFORM FMG AUTHORITIES THAT HE HAS BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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INTERVIEWED BY U.S. CUSTOMS. FEW, IF ANY, OTHER NIGERIANS MAY HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THE INTERVIEW. IT IS POSSIBLE, THEREFORE, THAT THE NIGERIAN AUTHORITIES MAY NEVER LEARN THAT INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE, THUS DEFEATING OUR PURPOSE IN ARRANGING IT. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY VIEWS HOW THE OSHO INTERVIEW CAN NOW BE USED TO HELP BRING ABOUT FAVORABLE OUTCOME OF GUTHRIE/SPRIGGS CASE.

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